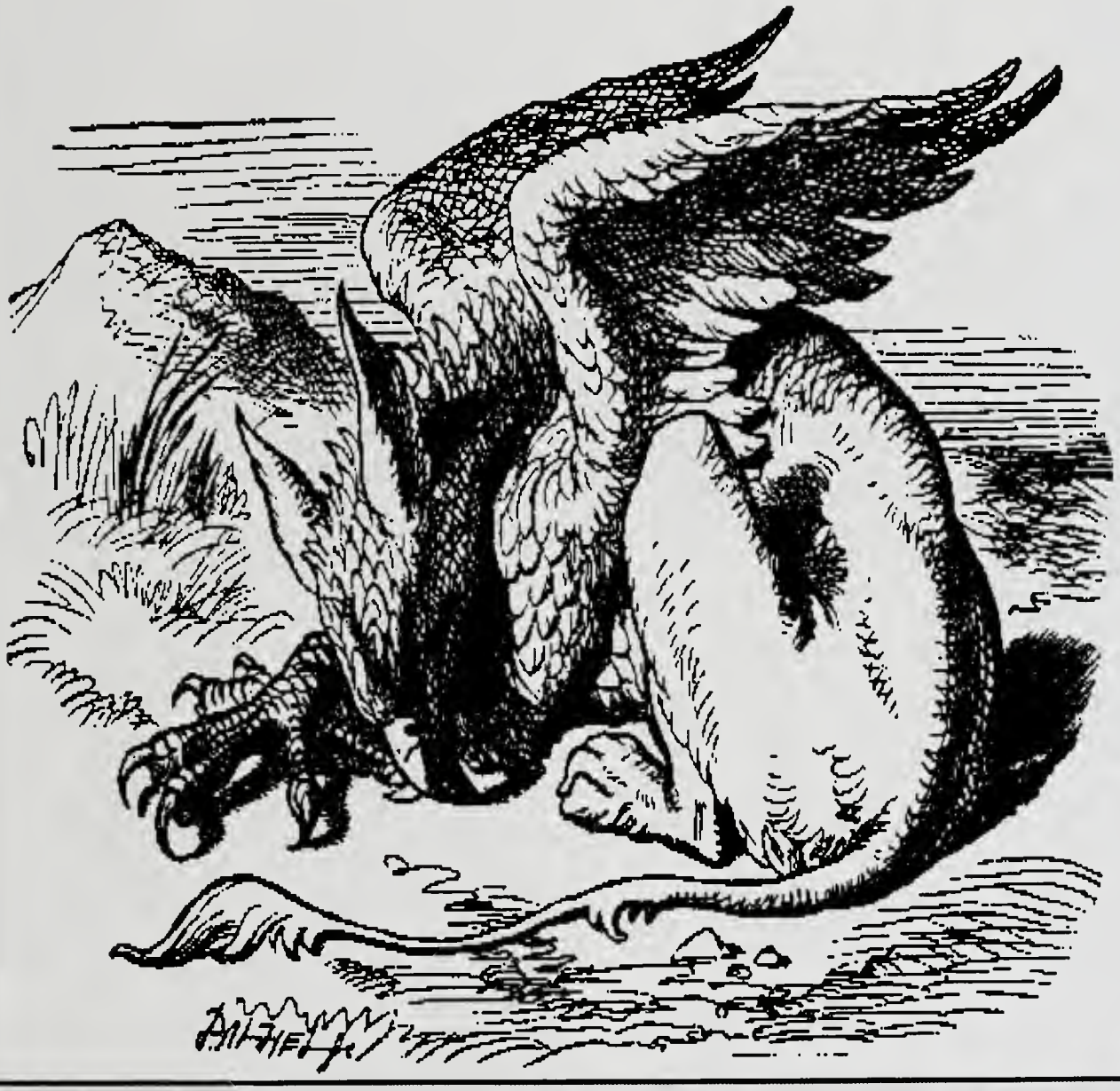
Selwyn House School

NEXUS



February 11, 1997

Editorial
-Eric Benner

Greetings, grads and fellow students! Well, this is the second issue of the NEXUS. I hope you like it. Personally, I think the writing itself is as good as any I've seen in the three years I've read this publication, so you should enjoy at least some of it (there's no accounting for some tastes). Thanks to those who took the time to write and submit articles despite very busy schedules. Keep em coming!

Although not everyone got around to putting them into written form, you guys have come up with (and told me) some really great ideas for articles and columns and I hope that some of them will take shape before the next issue.

We at NEXUS are hoping to keep this publication relatively monthly, so any and all articles are requested as of the release of this issue. Anyone who wants their voice to be heard by all (all literate) is free and strongly recommended to write down his thoughts or opinions and hand them to me on a disk. Writers are free to choose from any topic they please, so everyone who's got something to say has a forum with which to say it.

On another note, I hope you all had nice winter vacations, no one lost too much money during the superbowl, all your weekends are homework-free, your first term report cards were good, your first choice applications are accepted, you all have a wonderful March break (this is why weekly issues make for better editorials), and finally, I hope that you all submit lots and lots of articles for the next NEXUS, which should print before the spring break.

Joe Camel's Worst Nightmare
-Jeremy Baskin

The Federal government just recently effected yet another bone-headed law: the ban of most tobacco advertising at sport and arts events. Do any of these names ring bells: Du Maurier Open, Benson & Hedges Fireworks, Craven A Festival Just For Laughs? How about the international jazz and film festivals, not to mention the Grand Prix? All of these events, and others, which make Montreal the special city it is, differentiating it from an average metropolitain area like, say, Toronto, have been put in jeopardy by the new federal law.

For some odd reason, Diane Marleau et al. believe that eliminating advertising will stop the young from smoking. Funny, how a real crackdown on the thousands of depanneurs who sell illegally to minors wasn't issued -- that might result in a loss of tax money. This shows a major contradiction: according to the government, cigarettes themselves are legal, but advertising them is illegal; they're good enough to buy and collect taxes from, but bad enough to appear on billboards. The law contradicts the freedoms of speech and expression, engraved so deeply in our constitution. With this useless law, the government appears anti-smoking, without losing a penny of tax revenue. Things are just funny that way.

And it's not as if a non-smoker will go downtown, see Chick Corea and Joshua Redman jam up a storm, look at a poster of the Marlboro Man and suddenly realize, "Hey, maybe I should give smoking a try." And even if he did, it would be better than his looking at a poster of Molson (Continued on page 7)

Is Three and a Half Years Enough?
-Morgan Lackenbauer

Graham James was once a respected junior hockey coach, a man revered for his crusade against fighting and violence in hockey. As it turns out, what he has admitted to doing to teenage hockey players amounts to an even more horrid type of violence. On January 2, James was sentenced to 3 1/2 years in prison for sexually assaulting two of his players, one of whom is Boston Bruins winger Sheldon Kennedy, while he was the coach and GM of the Swift Current Broncos. He abused his powers to get what he wanted; he threatened to ruin players' careers unless his sexual desires were fulfilled. James' actions have sent shockwaves through the entire hockey world and raised questions about how Canada's junior hockey system is run. Firstly, it should be pointed out that 3 1/2 years in prison is not nearly enough for what James did. He has ruined the lives of Sheldon Kennedy and at least one other player and, in all likelihood, several more. The suffering that these boys experienced will take years to go away. It's very possible that it never will. The horror of being sexually abused will stay with them for the rest of their lives, yet their tormentor will be a free man in a matter of years. If you ask me, sexually abusing an adolescent 300 times over a span of six years is one of the most despicable things I have ever heard. Either he should be "drawn and quartered" as Don Cherry put it, or he should be forced to suffer for as long as his victims continue to suffer. Sadly, it seems evident that Graham James did not have only two victims. If you think any differently you are only kidding yourself. Calgary police say they know of two more victims, including one (Continued on page 3)

Book Talks - What For?
-Earl Meriales

If there is anything that you can expect as you enter a new term in Selwyn House, it's that you'll have homework. If anything, any student will agree that assignments are dished out the moment you step in to the class room, increasing exponentially to the day of your final exam in Grade 11. It's a rare holiday indeed if one has nothing to do on an afternoon. One of the most consuming assignments to undertake is the ever present book report. Everyone must be aware of this assignment since it starts somewhere in elementary and hangs on all the way to senior year like an ever present parasite. What makes this an annoying assignment is the idea that it invades private time. The first assignment of every year is the summer reading books, one assigned book and one of your own choice, to be written by the end of the first week. Imagine! So eager to dish out work that it can't wait until school starts. It's a constant haggle to worry about what books to read and having them done before the end of summer, and summer just never seems long enough as it is. The particular nuisance about book talks are the credit books that one has to read. Such classics include the ever so forgotten books as the Three Musketeers and The Invisible Man which are a tiresome read. Long and tedious, they're like marathons for the eyes. Reading books such as Mary Shelly's Frankenstein is much like decrypting an old WWII German code book. The analysis of each book is like a gigantic puzzle because of every author's style and message. Every two-three months we visit the library to pick up a new book and prepare another report. The choices of books aren't too bad. The (Continued on page 5)

A Slight Case of Overbombing: A Review
-Trevor Ahmedali

A while ago, a friend recommended this band and, in particular, this CD to me. I thought I'd go out on a limb and accept his advice; I'm glad I did, as this is one of the best CDs I've heard recently. Although A Slight Case of Overbombing isnít particularly recent (Warner Brothers UK released it in 1993), in my opinion it is superb music.

I had not heard any songs by The Sisters of Mercy before my friend recommended them; I had only heard the band's name, but even this is apparently more than a lot of people know of them. Some British bands like Sisters of Mercy and Blur don't have much of a North American audience, concentrating instead towards a British audience, or a European one at best, unlike Oasis or the Beatles.

Seeing as most people reading this are probably unfamiliar with The Sisters of Mercy, I suppose I had best provide some background information. In 1980, Andrew Eldritch (lyricist/vocals) and Gary Marx (guitar) formed the band in Leeds, Yorkshire, England with the help of Dr. Avalanche, an electronic drum machine (I guess this says something about the importance of drummers if they could be replaced by machines back in 1980). With a distinct style of writing and a penchant for industrial/Gothic imagery, the Sisters of Mercy carved out a niche for themselves and developed a cult following (not in the literal sense) in England. During the course of the band's existence, the only person who has always been a part of the band is Eldritch (and Dr. Avalanche, of course). Everyone else (Marx and the people who

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(Continued Article)
-Morgan Lackenbauer

(Continued from page 2) "high-profile" NHL player. I wouldn't be surprised if there were several others. Junior hockey in Canada has got to look at the way they run things; it's time to make some serious changes. Many young hockey players leave home at the age of fifteen or younger to go and play Major Junior. Most of these players look to the coach of their team as a father figure. They put their trust in these men, and as a result, they are vulnerable. I think fifteen is far too young to move away from home. This is the age where children need their parents the most. When they move away from home they are left sad and lonely. This is the perfect time for sexual predators like James to strike. The Canadian Hockey League should adopt a rule to eliminate young players from playing for teams in cities outside of their hometown. If they don't, and children are forced to leave home in order to play junior hockey, the situation will surely repeat itself. James has been called a pedophile by many and classified a hebophile by psychologists. If you ask me, the man is just plain sick. Asked if he felt what he had done was wrong, James said, "It's wrong because Sheldon Kennedy says it's wrong even if I don't agree with everything (Kennedy said)." Obviously the man just doesn't get it. After abusing Kennedy for years, James had the nerve to say that he hoped he and Kennedy could still be friends. The scary thing is that this man, if you can even call him a man, will be free to find his next victim in only 3 1/2 years. After winning the Memorial Cup in 1989, Graham James was at the top of his profession. Today, he is the lowest scum on the face of the earth, and the hockey world is left to come to terms with his awful legacy.

Neo-Beatlemania - A Music Review
-Ian Ratzer

Starting in 1995, the Beatles, the group that paved the way for popular music artists right into this decade, began releasing their 'Anthology' series. However, this is not just another set of 'greatest hits'; the release of the three double albums (~$25 ea.) is a memorable moment in Beatles history.

For the first time since 1970, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Ringo Starr, and John Lennon (!) have released new music (no, they still don't know how to resuscitate dead rock stars). Yoko Ono had recently found an old demo tape of music for John's working album from 1980. Two tracks from this recording of John singing and playing the piano were arranged and re-recorded by the other members of the group. The first two anthologies each feature one of these songs.

All three of the albums feature new versions of the old classics. Some are remixes, different combinations of takes, or unused tracks. All of the material on these albums is new. The question is whether they are really improvements over the originals. Can the uninitiated appreciate these albums as well as the hard-core fans?

One

This was the most 'fad' of the three anthologies. Many non-Beatles fans went out and bought this album, because of its publicity. For the most part, they were probably mildly pleased. This album features many obscure, unreleased tracks and hard-to-find tunes from B-sides. The music is also punctuated with odd verbal commentary from band members and Brian Epstein. These proved to be a nuisance, and they do not appear on the two subsequent albums.

Most of the tunes on this album are straight rock 'n' roll. That means that the same blues chord pattern dominates many of the pieces in the anthology. This makes the listener feel as if the same song if being played over and over. Because of this, the music has a dated sound. Still, the template of the 12-bar pattern is catchy. It takes a few playings before it begins to lose its charm. Also, the earlier songs were recorded on Paleolithic equipment, and it really shows.

Around half of the songs on this album were not written by Beatles. This shows through prominently. No matter who plays Chuck Berry's 'Roll over Beethoven,' it will sound pretty much the same. Since the Beatles began their career playing many rock 'n' roll staples, This album (which covers the years 1961-1963) lacks the true 'Beatles' character that is very present in the other two anthologies. There are, however, a few excellent renditions of the earlier works: 'Love Me Do,' 'Please Please Me,' 'Money,' 'One after 909,' 'She Loves You,' and 'I Want to Hold Your Hand.' The featured John Lennon re-make, 'Free as a Bird,' is a top-notch track. It measures up to most of the Beatles' finest music. Had Lennon not been killed, his next album would have made big ripples in the world of popular music.

Two

This is far and away the best of the three albums. It covers the middle years of the Beatles' career, calling them the 'years of dash and daring.' This is the period when the Beatles had broken away from the norms of rock 'n' roll to let their own creativity shine through. Some of their best songs appear on this album: 'Yesterday,' 'Help!,' 'Taxman,' 'Strawberry Fields Forever,' 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds,' 'I Am the Walrus,' and 'Hello, Goodbye.' Also, the songs are much better arranged in this collection than on the other two albums. They have more coherence, more character, and more 'Beatle' in them.

One annoying thing about this album is the false starts and chatter. Although serious fans might appreciate hearing Paul stop the song, complain about having left his pick with his clothes, and then start bitching about the bass line of the song, this reviewer is (Continued on page 7)

Is Five Hours Long Enough?
-Brendan Paull

One of the most controversial questions on the minds of students today is whether the school day is too long. Each day, we spend five hours in classes, one hour and forty minutes in breaks, and another hour and twenty minutes in extracurricular activities. This is more than most other schools in Montreal. I am going to compare Selwyn with an average public school, a totally random one, say John Rennie High School on the West Island. Their classes begin and end just about when ours do, but with no extracurricular activities outside of that, except varsity sporting events. Their physical education is scheduled as a part of the five hours of classes. On an average day, students at Selwyn House finish school at about 4:30 while the public sector school day usually ends at around 3:30. Therefore, each day Selwyn House students spend an extra hour in school.

Although we spend more time in school per day, public schools have many more school days. They press all their Christmas exams into three days, unlike Selwyn's generous two week exam period. Two years ago Selwyn House ended its school year well before John Rennie. The government exams that are scheduled to fall into the public schools' exam schedules took place after Selwyn's School Closing. Overall, though, the number of hours spend in school are probably about the same. Students who go to Selwyn generally spend time to get to and from school. I'd estimate that the average student takes about twenty minutes to get to half an hour. The portion of us who live on the West Island or the South Shore usually take over an hour, by public transport. At John Rennie, students either walk to school or they are bussed in by a bus. (Continued on page 7)

Continued Article
-Earl Meriales

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selection range is great and you could even appeal to read a book off the reading list, as long as it has some possible meaning behind it. Some times it is preferable to a Physics Lab or French essay, but other times it's just another assignment that requires you to put a good deal of your private time away and pick up a "good" book.

NEXUS Credits

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(Continued Articles)
-Trevor Ahmedali & Jeremy Baskin

(Continued from page 3) joined later) either quit or were booted out by Eldritch, the self-confessed 'world's greatest lyricist' (gee, I thought that Oasis' Noel Gallagher had claimed that title). The group disbanded around 1995, but it is rumoured that he is forming yet another reincarnation of the band.

A Slight Case of Overbombing is a collection of their greatest hits from their first three albums: First and Last and Always, Floodland, and Vision Thing. All the songs here sport excellent music, but the main appeal of this band is the Gothic imagery in Eldritchís lyrics and his haunting voice. The latter adds to his music what Vincent Price's narration added to Michael Jackson's 'Thriller.' The overall tone of the album is very dark. Don't expect to be cheered up with lyrics like 'A devil in a black dress watches over/My guardian angel walks away/Life is short and love is always over in the morning' ('Temple of Love'). Some of the songs are actually pretty intelligent, such as 'Dominion/Mother Russia' and 'Lucretia, my Reflection.' None of the songs are at all crude, although the chorus of 'Vision Thing' contains that twelve-letter word that you could technically call your father but probably shouldn't. Something about one in a motorcade. Go figure.

Another advantage this album holds is its length: at over 73 minutes, you're at least getting your money's worth. This time is spread out among only twelve songs, meaning the best ones here range from seven to ten minutes in length. If there is one complaint I have about the songs, it's that Eldritch's lyrics are often so packed with metaphors that his thoughts can be lost to the listener. Although they sound rather poetic, lyrics like these must have some hidden meaning to which we are not privy:

We serve an old man in a dry season,

A lighthouse keeper in the desert sun.

Dreamers of sleepers and white treason,
We dream of rain and the history of the gun. ('Dominion/Mother Russia')

All things considered, this is an excellent piece of music for those of you who like dark rock music that borders on alternative rock.

NOTE TO MR. SHANNON: Hurry up and write something; I'm running short on material for Baie d'Something-Or-Other mockery!

(Continued from page 1) Export, drinking a little too much, and causing a six-car pileup driving home on the 2-20. In the long run, cigarettes might give you cancer (even though only 14% of smokers actually develop lung cancer), but alcohol, if abused, can land a group of people in the emergency room because of one person's carelessness.

(How about a crackdown on jeans and beer commercials that depict skinny women as sex objects? These advertisements are one of the primary causes of disorders in thousands of teenage girls including anorexia and bulimia.) What is the world's most profitable industry? The black market. In spite of Bill Clinton's "crackdown" on marijuana in the United States, pot usage among youths has doubled in the past five or six years. There are no signs at the Superbowl encouraging kids to smoke up with Joe Camel, yet somehow millions of teenagers find their way to this illegal drugs

Finally -- and this is the biggest irony of all --, the government isn't actually hurting the tobacco companies so much as they are the arts organizations. Groups like the Just for Laughs Festival are on life-support from tobacco companies. The anti-tobacco-advertising law doesn't preach anti-smoking as much as it does anti-philanthropy. In effect, the arts will be put more at risk until the federal government gets serious, and you know as well as I when that will happen. We can therefore look forward to a Montreal with a night life rivaling that of Detroit -- and more of Nick-a-teen in M.R.E.

Continued Articles
-Ian Ratzer & Brendan Paull

(Continued from page 4) more interested in hearing the Beatles play. The other albums have a bit of this commentary, but this one has far too much.

This album features 'Real Love,' the other rediscovered Lennon piece. This one is even better than 'Free as a Bird.' It is easier to hum, and the vocals are a bit less abrasive.

Three

This album shows the decline of the Beatles. Released for Christmas 1996, it caused much less of a stir than the release of the first two. There is a clear sign of increased creativity, but, unfortunately, this album shows what hallucinogens can do. Anthology 1: 'This is your brain.' Anthology 3: 'This is your brain on drugs. Any questions?' But seriously, folks, this album does have its 'high' points. Some of the very best songs of the Beatles' career surfaced during this time, and this anthology's versions give them new life: 'Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da,' 'While My Guitar Gently Weeps,' 'Hey Jude,' 'Octopus' Garden,' 'The Long and Winding Road,' 'Let It Be,' and 'Get Back.'

And fine works they are, indeed. The only problem is that they are 'diamonds in the rough.' They stand out against the rest of the album, which, apart from a few other fine tunes, consists mostly of straight chords on an acoustic guitar and silly lyrics: 'She looks as an African queen / She eating twelve chapatties and cream / She taste as Mongolian lamb / She coming from Aldabaram' etc.

There's also that other little thing. No new Lennon song! Yes, there are a few 'previously unissued' songs on the album, but they neatly slide into the above group: silly lyrics, undemanding playing. Still, this album is worth considering, because of the excellent re-makes.

It's a shame John Lennon was killed in 1980. Not only would he have continued the most successful ex-Beatles solo career, but the band could have had a true reunion, a la 'Hell Freezes Over.' A Beatles tour would be a very memorable event, indeed. Until technology lets us revive John Lennon, we will all have to be contented with these three anthologies. While none of them is without significant faults, they are all worth the trouble, especially for the hard-core fan. To get an even more complete picture of the Beatles' career (Without buying all thirteen of their studio albums), I strongly recommend the 'Red Album (1962-1966)' and 'Blue Album (1967-1970)' as companions to the anthologies. These are two 'greatest hits' double albums released soon after the break-up. It is good to hear the original recordings of the pieces being re-hacked. What does this all mean? It's time we all looked backwards for some great hits that still sound fresh, despite decades of musical change.

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Students in Canada spend less time in school than most other industrialized countries. There are only one hundred and eighty school days. It is very clear other countries, such as Japan, make their students spend much more time in school. Not only do they have some classes on Saturdays, but their school year is much longer than Canada's.

In my opinion, the amount of time spend in school for the average Canadian high school student is far too low. I would like to see more time spent in schools. Not only would that help increase the average intelligence of people in Canada, but it would also help to reduce the amount of crimes caused by adolescents.